A FORT THAT WASN'T

~~a lot of the stuff~~ (Blue)

Recently Discovered Site at Elk Point Could Not Have Been Old Henry House, as Supposed

By MARY H. T. ALEXANDER

A NEWS item from Elk Point, Alberta, in the Journal recently had it that a professor of the University of Saskatchewan has discovered near that place the site of an old Hudson's Bay post built in 1683 and named Fort Henry. The dispatch further stated that "a monument will be built on the site" and that "there is little left to mark the spot except a slight depression where the stockade stood and the clay which was the chimney." Furthermore, it is stated that "the fort was abandoned 164 years ago."

These statements are an excuse for the present article, for from an historical point of view, it is highly improbable that such a fort ever stood there or that it was a Hudson's Bay post at that time; first, because the fur trade was not organized until nearly a hundred years later and no company had penetrated thus far into the interior; secondly, because the Hudson's Bay company had only a few forts operating then —not more than six, if as many—and all were adjacent to the shores of Hudson bay; thirdly, because no Henry house was known to have existed earlier than 1801, and that no nearer than the Red River valley.

Henry house, built in 1810 by the younger Alexander Henry, was on the Athabaska. There were two traders of the same name: the first, Alexander Henry, the elder, uncle of the builder of Henry house, having been the first white man to trade with the Indians in what is now Alberta. He was an independent trader, at first, as his "Journal of Adventures," 1760-1776, published in 1801, will show. A copy of this edition is in the possession of Hon. A. C. Rutherford, Edmonton. The younger Henry's diaries, edited by Elliot Coues, may be found on the shelves of the Alberta provincial library.

Not a H.B.C. Post

The fort said to have been discovered at Elk Point, could not have been Fort Henry, nor could it have been either a Hudson's Bay or North West fort. Satisfied with the volume of its trade, the Old Company of Gentlemen Adventurers was quite content to operate from its forts, which stood on the rivers draining into the icy waters of Hudson bay, and the North West company was not in existence until nearly one hundred years later. If any fort existed at that time in the territory that is now Alberta, the only remote possibility is that it was built by a very unknown and early independent French trader.

Edmonton and the entire province of Alberta should have a very genuine interest in the establishment of the dates of those old forts, for out of them gradually arose the entire business development which slowly but surely followed. The history of Edmonton city proper really began with the building of new Fort Augustus (afterwards Edmonton), by James Hughes in 1798, the older post of the same name at Fort Saskatchewan having been destroyed by fire.

The building of this fort at such an epoch-making period indicated the determination of Hughes and other partners of the North West company to fight the Hudson's Bay company, to the death, the latter having by this time begun to waken to the possibilities of trade with the interior. Hughes, like his partner and assistant, John Macdonald of Garth, was destined by this determination to play a very dramatic part in the coming of Lord Selkirk, the establishment of the Red River colony, and the fracas with Selkirk himself during the startling events which took place later at Fort William. Hughes, with Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Macdonald, and others, were Selkirk's very kind hosts at first and afterwards his bitterest opponents during the picturesque reign of the Beaver club of Montreal and Fort William.

Fights of Early Days

Few forts were built before the days of organized trading. The historic fight between the North West company and the Hudson's Bay company did not begin in any degree of intensity until this arrangement of 1792, but a very serious scrap arose through the claim of the North West company, that the charter of the Hudson's Bay company did not give suzerainty to territory not drained by waters flowing into Hudson bay. They forgot, however, that when the British conquered Canada, the treaty of Paris abrogated all French rights, and events finally proved that the old company of British traders was quite within its rights in trading where it pleased. It was not until 1821, however, that the tomahawk of discord was buried, when the two companies, having fought to the point of exhaustion, found that if they were to survive at all it must be by amalgamation.

It is altogether out of the question to think that the Hudson's Bay company established a fort near Elk Point in 1683. Even La Verendrye, who was considered one of the very early explorers, did not erect his post at the forks of the Saskatchewan until 1749.

The First Forts

No greater number of traders tried to go away far inland before the days of Hearne, though Groseillers, Radisson, and La Veréndrye had done much to draw attention to a vast continent which lay fallow to the venturesome for trading purposes, offering riches beyond anything ever conceived before. The two first mentioned were really responsible for the charter granted to the Hudson's Bay company by King Charles II. in 1670 but were afterwards dismissed from the service of that company, because it was supposed that they favored the French. They traded according to the charter, with the forts which skirted the bay.

Other forts, all established nearly a century after the date given for the building of the supposed Fort Henry and pertinent to this article, were South Branch fort, from which the fur traders are supposed to have traveled from a spot near the present city of Prince Albert, north and south along the Saskatchewan rivers; Forts Augustus, upper and lower (later known as Edmonton, most important of them all); Neepawi house; Rocky Mountain house; Vermillion; Pitt, Cumberland, Carlton, Assiniboine; Upper White Mud house near Wabamun, and Lower White Brook house closer to Edmonton; Manchester and Chesterfield houses, and of course the famous Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabaska.

It was from this last-named fort that Alexander Mackenzie made his exploratory journeys, first along the Peace (or Beaver) and Mackenzie rivers; and second, when he started on his famous "passage by land" to the Pacific in 1793. His quaint journal, published in 1801, mentions a number of these forts; so do the journals of both of the Henrys, uncle and nephew; and it is certain that the latter did not establish Henry house on the Athabaska until 1810, its tenure of existence before its destruction being only three years.

Edmonton Store

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Hudson's Bay Company Trading Posts

McPherson
Arctic Red River
Good Hope
Norman — Nelson
Wrigley — Providence
Simpson — Rae
Liard — Resolution
Fort Smith
Smith Landing
Hay River
Fort Chipewyan
Fond du Lac
Fort McKay
Fort McMurray
Edmonton
Spirit River
Athabasca Landing
Peace River Crossing
Red River
Wabasca
Trout Lake
Chipewyan Portage
Keg River
Upper Hay River
Vermilion
North Shop
Grouard
St. John's
Hudson's Hope
Whitefish Lake
Sturgeon Lake
Lac du Brochet
Swan River Outpost
Eskimo Outpost
Pelican Narrows
Pukattawagan
Cumberland House
The Pas
Cedar Lake
Fort a la Corne
Montreal Lake
Lac la Ronge
Green Lake
Isle a la Crosse
Canoe Lake
Old Souris River
Dipper
Clear Lake
Portage la Roche
Onion Lake
Cold Lake
Buffalo River
Stanley
Norway House
Nelson River
Cross Lake
Split Lake
Oxford House
God's Lake
Island Lake
Berens River
Little Grand Rapids
Fort Alexander
Deer Lake
York Factory
Severn
Trout Lake
Churchill
Chesterfield Inlet
Weenusk
Shamattawa
Baker Lake
Nipigon House
Montizambert
Long Lake
Peterbell
Missanable
Nipigon — White Dog
Mattice — Osnaburg
Lac Seul
Grassy Narrows
Fort William
Dinorwic
Fort Hope
Graham
Hudson
Pine Ridge
Lake Savant
Cat Lake
Grand Lac — Minaki
Barriere — Abitibi
Bell River — Matogami
Biscotasing — Temagami
North Bay
English River
Martens Falls
Matachewan
Moose Factory D. O.
New Post
Albany
Attawapiskat
Rupert's House
Mistassinny
Woswonaby
Neoskweskan
Nemaska
Eastmain
Fort George
Great Whale River
Charlton Depot
Bersimis
Seven Islands
Mingan
Romaine
St. Augustine
Weymontachingue
Obijuan
Manowan
Pointe Bleue
Rigolet
North West River
Davis Inlet
Cartwright
Fort Chimo
Port Burwell
Stuparts Bay
Lake Harbour
Wolstenholme
Cape Dorset
Coats Island
Fort McKenzie
Whale River
Leaf River
St. John's — Babine
Hazelton — Quesnel
Fort St. James
McLeod's Lake
Fort Crahane
Telegraph Creek
Dease Lake
McDames Creek
Liard
Victoria D. O.
Herschel Island
Baillie Island
Kittiganzuit
Aklavic
Fort Bacon

Old Fort Edmonton

SIR GEORGE SIMPSON CELEBRATION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.

Governor of Hudson's Bay Company to Participate.

THE annual visit of Mr. Charles V. Sale, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, to Canada will have this year a historic touch. Mr. Sale, who left for the Dominion in the Canadian Pacific liner *Empress of Australia* last Saturday (August 11), will be present at the centenary celebration of Sir George Simpson's well-known journey across Canada, which will be held in British Columbia on September 17th.

The career of Sir George Simpson, "Emperor of the Fur Traders," is one of the shining lights in the annals of a corporation rich in memories of famous men. When still a young man, only a year out from his native Scotland, he reached in one leap the position of Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company in Rupert's Land, and veritable ruler of a vast territory extending from Hudson's Bay to the far Pacific.

Young as he was, he soon showed the stuff of which he was made. "The power of the new Governor was at once felt from Montreal and the Ottawa to the Lake Superior region; and through the trade stretches of Rupert's Land, east to York Factory, and west to the Rocky Mountains; while even the valleys and shores of the Pacific Coast gave to it immediate response," writes Boyce, in his biographical sketch of Simpson.

Sir George Simpson was an ideal Governor. His plan was not to sit in the office at Montreal, give orders, and allow others to carry them out. During his forty years of office he made forty canoe-visits over the long fur-traders route up the rivers and lakes to the interior. Periodically he visited the Old Land, crossing the ocean on the Hudson's Bay Company ship which sailed between London and York Factory, on Hudson's Bay, and two portly volumes, entitled "Journey Round the World," enhance his fame as a traveller.

A Royal Progress.

Among the more important of Sir George Simpson's travels was his great journey from York Factory to the Pacific, the record of which has been left to us in the entertaining narrative of a member of the party, Archibald Macdonald.

The departure of the Governor from York Factory on July 28, 1828, was a picturesque spectacle. The event had brought the whole Indian community about the posts, and no more animated scene had been witnessed since Miles Macdonell and his Scottish settlers, nearly twenty years before, had started for their new home on the banks of the Red River. As the two canoes, containing nine picked men each, set out, Hayes River resounded with the cheers of the assembled officers and traders, and a salute of seven guns made the fir-trees of the Northern station re-echo with the din.

Norway House was the first of the stations to be visited. "As we waft along under easy sail, the men with a clean change and mounting new feathers, the Highland bagpipes in the Governor's canoe was echoed by the bugle in mine; then these were laid aside, on nearer approach to port, to give free scope to the vocal organs of about eighteen Canadians (French) to chant one of these voyageur airs peculiar to them, and always so perfectly rendered. Our entry to Jack River House (Norway House) about 7 p.m. was certainly more imposing than anything hitherto seen in this part of the Indian country. Immediately on landing his Excellency was preceded by the piper from the water to the Fort, while we were received with all welcome by Messrs. Chief Trader McLeod and Dease, Mr. Robert Clouston, and a whole host of ladies."

"Kitche Okema."

Indian warriors and trappers from the surrounding settlements, with their families, had flocked to the fort. The "Kitche Okema"—the greatest mortal they had ever seen—was in their midst.

The royal progress of the Governor was continued all across the continent. Fort Chipewyan, on Lake Athabasca, which was Simpson's first station after his arrival from Scotland, was en fête, and the same waving of flags, firing of guns, shouting of Indians and employees, and the sound of singing and bagpipes marked every stage of the journey.

Crossing the Rocky Mountains by the Peace River Pass, the Governor's party approached Fort St. James, the principal depot for the country north of the forks of the Fraser River. "The day as yet being fine, the flag was put up, the piper in full Highland costume, and every arrangement was made to arrive at Fort James in the most imposing manner we could for the sake of the Indians. Accordingly, within about a thousand yards of the establishment, descending a gentle hill, a gun was fired, the bugle sounded, and soon after the piper commenced the celebrated march of the clans—'Si coma leum codagh na shea'—('Peace, or war if you wish it otherwise'). The guide, with the British ensign, led the van, followed by the band; then the Governor on horseback, supported behind by Dr. Hamlyn and myself on our chargers, two deep; twenty men, with their burdens, next formed the line, then one loaded horse, and lastly Mr. McGillivray (with his wife and light infantry) closed the rear. During a brisk discharge of small arms and wall pieces from the Fort, Mr. Douglas met us a short distance in advance, and in this order we made out entrée into the capital of Western Caledonia."

The Mr. Douglas referred to in Macdonald's diary was another Scot, Sir James Douglas, who made history in Canada. He established Fort Camosun, the nucleus of the present City of Victoria, capital of British Columbia, and rose to the position of Governor of Vancouver Island, as well as of British Columbia as separate Provinces, retiring in 1863.

A Patriotic Scot.

The great achievements of Sir George Simpson were a remarkable reorganisation and restoration of the fur trade of British North America, which he found in a state of chaos and decline. He was also, on the whole, a kind and skilful administrator of the affairs of the infant colonies of Red River and the Pacific Coast, which have since grown to be the prosperous and progressive provinces of Western Canada, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia.

Sir George Simpson was ever a patriotic Scotsman. Whether he was on his native heather or carrying on the business of the Hudson's Bay Company among his Scottish associates in Montreal, or dashing along the inland waters of the fur traders' country, he never forgot the customs, history, chivalry or literature of his homeland. To him was largely due the enormous proportion of Scottish officers and men of the Company during the long years of his régime, which gave rise to the saying that to rise in its service it was a special qualification to have a Scottish name.

British Columbia does well to honour the memory of Sir George Simpson, and the presence of the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company at the celebration will give a fine exemplification of historical sequence. KEITH MORRIS.

A SPLENDID HARVEST IN PROSPECT.

THE Winnipeg correspondent of the *Times* telegraphed on [illegible] report of the *Manitoba* [illegible] Prairie Provinc[illegible] [illegible]ats and was expected to be general throughout the whole of this province this week, according to the weekly cabled crop report received in London on Wednesday last week from the